5: Bahrain G-5 (1926-1937) 1937 MZZ Bahrain MZZ

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Above
A Policeman

Below
Police on Parade

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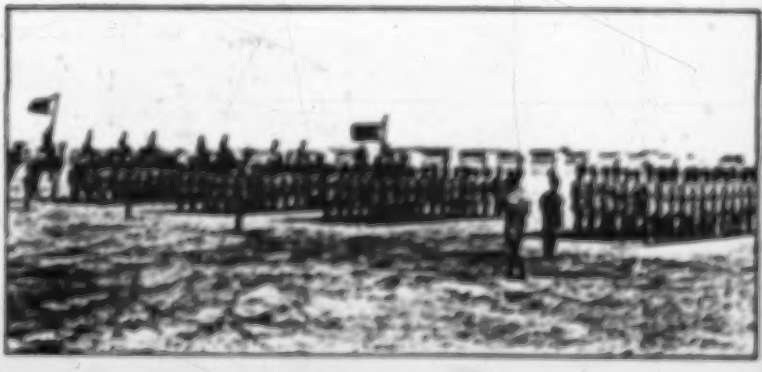

[facing p. 10]

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Recent Innovations. Three times during the last ten years the composition of the police force has entirely changed. First it was a Levy Corps of Muscat Baluchis, then ex-Indian Army Punjabis, and finally the present force, whose development and training dates from about 1930. During the last six years, though expansion and development has been restricted owing to the need for economy, various innovations and improvements have been carried out. Necessary alterations were made in the Fort, which is an ancient building of mud and stone, whose walls constantly crumble and subside. Two large, airy barrack rooms were built, and a large swimming tank was constructed in a corner of the barrack yard. A police station was built in the turbulent town of Hedd, much to the dissatisfaction of the inhabitants, who have a rooted objection to law and order, and a police post was built at Budeya where a section of Natives are now stationed. A police post with a lock-up and a flagstaff has a salutary effect on both these places, which have always been resentful of control.

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Police Band. The police band, consisting mostly of younger brothers of policemen, was started about two years ago. At first the band played entirely from ear, but in 1936 an Indian ex-army bandmaster was obtained as an instructor, and the band has now learned to play from music. A few years ago, during the visit of the Chief-in-Command, East India Squadron, the bandmaster of the marine band composed a national anthem for the Shaikh of Bahrain, which is now played on suitable occasions, and perhaps eventually the public will recognise it as a national anthem.

Camel Section. In 1935 a camel section was started, consisting of a dozen men mounted on camels which were provided by the Ruler. The N.C.O. in charge, a Sudanese, served in Egypt in the Frontier Districts Administration Camel Corps, and most of the men are manumitted slaves. The object of the mounted section is to patrol the coast and more inaccessible parts of the islands and to catch smugglers and persons landing without passports. The section has learned the regular camel drill; it presents a very smart appearance when on parade. Another section mounted on ponies is now being organised.

Shooting. The police, on the whole, are good at shooting, and during the last two years they have competed in a number of shooting matches with teams from the sloops of the Persian Gulf Division and teams from the Englishmen and Americans employed by the Bahrain Petroleum Company. In most cases the police have won the matches, sometimes beating their opponents by a large score. At the beginning of the present year a new system has been brought into force by which every man will fire a course during the year, and there will be a yearly inter-section competition. There are several unusually good shots among the police, and the men all show great keenness.

Uniforms. The uniform of the police has passed through many changes in the last ten years. The original town police wore round black Persian caps, second-hand, ill-fitting khaki tunics originally used by the English Army, and long trousers. They now wear khaki shirts and shorts, puttees and sandals, and scarlet turbans as worn by certain Egyptian Army regiments, Somaliland Camel Corps, and Egyptian Camel Corps. In the winter they wear woollen jerseys and military overcoats.

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Police Training in India. During the last two years two parties of six N.C.O.'s and men were sent to the 10th Baluch Regiment at Karachi for a course of nine months' military training. The experiment has been very successful, and the value of the men as policemen has greatly increased owing to their training with the Indian Army. Had the men been able to speak Urdu they would have learnt more, but in each batch only one or two had any knowledge of the language. Any future experiments of this kind would, I am sure, be more successful if they took place in an Arabic-speaking country such as Iraq or Egypt. The training with the Army, and seeing a foreign country, has given the men who went to India more confidence in themselves than they had before.

Two years ago, Naib Abdel Karim, the son of the late superintendent of police, was sent to India for six months and attached for training to the Karachi police. The experiment was a success, but in this case the man could speak both English and Urdu, which enabled him to learn easily.